

# HOUSE RULES

What you need to know right away &  
Frequently Asked Questions



## **INTRODUCTION:**

The Center for Children and Families (CFCF) is a voluntary program and is a chance for you to live with your children while you are in treatment. There are rules in the house that you will be expected to follow. Rules are to keep you, your children, and other participants safe and sober. **Decisions/rules are made with the children's safety and needs as the first priority.**

You will be given **two handbooks and a list of house consequences** when you enter the home. The first, the HOUSE RULES (the one you're reading right now 😊) outlines the most important house rules; rules that if you break them could result in your discharge from the program.

The second, the PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK, gives you a list of more detailed rules (these are important but will be learned as you go), and some suggestions for how to make the home and your life safer and less full of chaos. It has household, parenting, and life-skills rules/tips we will be helping you work on while you are in the home.

Coming into any new program and a new home can be scary and overwhelming. We hope to make your move as easy as possible by making the rules as clear as we can. We have lots of staff/team members to help you so if you have ANY questions at all, please ask! You will also be assigned a participant mentor, someone who has been living in the home for awhile and can help explain things to you. We hope you will feel comfortable asking your participant mentor and the staff for assistance.

Even though the choice to participate in a structured program like ours is difficult, we think you've made a great choice! Research tells us that parents and their children all do better when children can remain in their parent's care while the parent is in treatment and while safety can be provided for everyone.

Making life changes will not be easy. In fact, you will have times of struggles and tests during your stay at CFCF. If you remain honest and open, especially in these times, these struggles will turn into "life lessons" which will help you move to your goal of a sober life. We don't promise that your time at CFCF will be easy. We are asking that you are willing to go to any length to turn your life around and being a life in sobriety. This will mean changing your "playgrounds and playmates" and to learn new ways to do lots of things. We will be here to support you, but the hard work is yours. We think it's worth it!

Thank you for staying with us! We look forward to working with you toward your goals!

*"I'm thankful for having someone around to help if I need it" (CFCF Graduate)*

*"I get lots of referrals for lots of resources" (CFCF Participant 2009)*

*"I am thankful for having my children with me and being able to parent them in a safe environment" (CFCF Participant 2011)*

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **How long will I have to wait to get into the home?**

We have a team that makes decisions about who moves into the home. You should expect 2-3 weeks from the time you apply to when we have a decision about moving in. Move in days are usually Mondays. It is important that this program works for you and your children so we take this process very seriously and make sure we have all the information we need to make decisions that offer you the best chance for success.

We sometimes have a waiting list. When this happens, we choose the order on the list based on the following: 1<sup>st</sup> – Yellowstone County Family Drug Treatment Court participants: 2<sup>nd</sup> - Yellowstone County Child Protective Services clients: 3<sup>rd</sup> – Region 3 (our immediate region) Child Protective Services clients: and 4<sup>th</sup> – Child Protective Services clients from other towns in Montana. Everyone else is placed on the list in order of the date we got the referral or date of discharge from treatment or correction in-patient programs.

### **How long am I expected to stay in the program?**

This depends on which house you live in and how well you are doing in your individual treatment plan. On average, people stay in the main house 6-9 months and in supportive 6-9 months, but this is ONLY an estimate. If you graduate from the program, you are eligible for life time services and are welcome to continue attending social events and house meetings and requesting assistance (financial or support) for as long as you would like/need.

### **Can I have a job while I live at CFCF?**

We can't stop you from having a job, but we prefer you don't have a job for the first phase of house programming (about the first 60-90 days). Getting used to the house, getting your children, and participating in treatment will take most of your time. After the first 60-90 days, you are encouraged to work as long as it does not get in the way of your parenting or your treatment. You cannot be turned down for placement/services at CFCF if you can't pay, but there are program fees you need to pay once you have income. We will work with you to get a job or an education that works for your schedule/needs. We will also work with other providers (like probation) that might want you to have a job right away to come up with the best plan for you to be successful in your recovery.

### **Will I have to break up with my boy/girlfriend or husband/wife while I live at CFCF?**

We do not currently allow couples to live together in the homes. You are discouraged from having or starting sexual, intimate or romantic relationships during your time with us. Any relationship you have affects your children, so we are very careful about your friends/partners. Any partner you have will be required to sign releases, submit to drug testing and follow a treatment plan. We hope you will think about taking this time to focus on your recovery, and your children.

### **What happens if I have a criminal history or currently have an open criminal case?**

If you have been convicted of any violent felony crime, you will not be accepted into CFCF. All other cases have to be looked at individually to see if your criminal issues will get in the way of treatment or parenting your children.

### **Am I on “lock down” in the home?**

CFCF is a voluntary program. We have 24-hour staff and curfews. You are expected to create a schedule/agenda with staff and to stick to that schedule, but we are not a “lock down” facility. If you leave without permission, you will not be allowed to take your children with you if staff believes they are in danger in your care.

### **How fast will my children be placed with me if I live in the Main House?**

This is decided on an individual basis and is based on the needs of your children. It is our goal that your children are in your full-time care within ninety (90) days of your moving into the house.

### **Who else will live in the home?**

Participants at CFCF come from all over. We have families who have been referred to us by the Court, Child Protective Services, treatment, community agencies, jail, prison, probation and from friends/family. We have families from all over Montana. What everyone has in common is a goal of being a clean and sober parent.

### **What programs do I have to participate in while in the home?**

If you have a treatment plan, discharge plan, or probation requirements when you come to the home, you will be expected to comply with those. You are expected to follow house rules, comply with random drug testing, safely parent your children and attend whatever meetings/groups are recommended for you along the way. CFCF also has some family programs you will be required to attend (Seeking Safety, Celebrating Families, and life-skills). The Team will work with you to find out what your goals are for employment, education, and building life skills and will work with you to reach those goals. Treatment plans are updated about every 3 months while you are in the homes.

CFCF also requires you to complete some evaluations and assessments (at no cost to you). These help the Team learn how to work with you best and to help you figure out your goals and needs. Your children will also complete evaluations which will be explained to you and that help you and anyone working with your kids to meet their needs.

## **PRIMARY PROGRAM RULES/REQUIREMENTS**

### **Child Safety**

Staff is available at all times to assist you with parenting questions, but your children are YOUR responsibility. Children are expected to abide by rules, just like other participants. You are expected to supervise them at ALL times. You are not allowed to babysit other participants' children and they are not allowed to babysit yours. (You are also not allowed to babysit other children outside the homes). **Physical or verbal abuse of your children or another participant's children will not be tolerated and will result in your discharge from the home/program.**

It is important that you understand that staff are **mandatory reporters**. This means if staff believes you have done anything that puts your children at risk for abuse or neglect in any way, they are REQUIRED BY LAW to report to Child Protective Services and your children may be at risk for removal.

### **Adult Participant & Staff Safety**

CFCF is a **group living environment**. It is important participants respect other participants, children and staff in the home. It is also important that everyone in the home works to keep the property clean and safe. You will be assigned house chores that you will be expected to do regularly. **If you seriously damage the property intentionally, you may be discharged from the program.**

We expect that you will come to the home with a positive approach, honesty, and as a role model to other participants and your children. Each family has a room of their own. Participants are NOT allowed in each other's rooms without that person's permission. If you are found in someone else's room without their permission or if you steal another participant's personal property, you may be discharged from the program.

There is a participant house meeting one night per week and you are required to attend that meeting. This is a chance for you to have a say in how the house is working, to ask questions, and to work with the other participants to make the house as safe and comfortable as possible. If conflicts come up between participants or with staff, you are expected to talk about these situations individually and at the house meeting. **Physical abuse of staff or other adult participants in the home will not be tolerated and will result in your discharge from the home/program.**

### **Sexual Conduct/Behavior**

You are not allowed to engage in sexual behavior (i.e. kissing, fondling, cuddling, and/or genital contact with participants, visitors, or staff **in the home**). If you are having a sexual/intimate relationship outside the home, this needs to be discussed with staff and your treatment providers to ensure you are safe. If you masturbate, you must be in the privacy of your own room and children or other participants are not to be present. **Violations of the sexual code of conduct in the home can result in your discharge from the program/home.**

## **Curfew & Agenda**

You are required to notify staff when you are coming into, or leaving the home. You will also be required to create a schedule/agenda with staff and to follow that schedule. If you need to change your agenda, or if you will be late, you must contact staff at the home and get permission/notify them. **Curfew at the Main House** is 9pm Monday through Saturday and 7:30pm on Sundays.

**Curfew at the Supportive House** is 9pm each evening. In the Main house, you are also required to turn in your cell phone to staff by 10pm. Staff will keep participant phones in a safe location and return them to participants each morning.

Any late night/overnight or special event passes must be requested from the staff at least one week in advance and are a privilege, not a right. If you are non-compliant with the house rules, do not expect requests/passes to be granted. **If you do not arrive for curfew or do not sleep at the house overnight without prior permission and/or an overnight pass, you may be discharged from the program/home.**

**For the first 30 days at the home, you will be on a restricted schedule.** You will be required to formally clock-in and out of the home each time you come in or leave. You will not be allowed to use your personal vehicle or cell phone (if you have either) at all (your car keys and cell phone will be safely stored by staff during this time). You will not be allowed to participate in outside activities that are not treatment/programming/house related, and, outside absolute emergencies, you will not be allowed any overnight or special passes.

## **Privacy & Confidentiality**

Your privacy and confidentiality are respected at CFCF but you will be required to sign releases that allow for the staff and Team to share information about you and your children and to get information from your outside providers so we can make sure we are all working together. Because this is a group living house, you will hear information about other participants and their children. You are REQUIRED to keep this information to yourself and not to tell people outside the house. **Discussing other participants or any confidential information outside the home (outside therapy/treatment settings) may be grounds for your discharge from the program/home.**

You are also subject to room/house checks without your prior knowledge. Staff may do room checks and searches of rooms in the home and of your personal property/vehicle. This can include the use of a drug dog. You will be notified after your room has been searched. Notification in writing will be placed on your bed after the search listing any actions that were/will be taken.

## **Drug/Alcohol Testing**

**CFCF is a sober living home.** You are required to be in treatment while you participate and to work toward maintaining your sobriety. You will be tested for drug and alcohol use frequently and randomly. With almost no exceptions, there are no excused UA tests and missed tests will be considered positive. There is absolutely no using of any mood altering substances (with the exception of caffeine and nicotine) and/or possession of any illegal substance or paraphernalia on the premises of CFCF. **Possession or use of mood altering substances in the house/on the property will result in discharge from the program/home** (and potentially a lifetime ban from re-application).

## **Medications**

Medication compliance is a must! In the Main House **all** medications (prescribed, over-the-counter, or herbal) must be given to staff and kept in a locked cabinet in the office. **You must take all prescribed medications AS prescribed by your doctor.** A medication log is kept and both you and staff will sign-off on medications. If you need to take over-the-counter medications (like aspirin), you must ask staff for those items. **All prescriptions and related documents/instructions MUST be provided to House staff/House manager even in the prescription is not filled. Staff must also be notified if prescriptions change at any time.**

**YOU are responsible for taking your medications as prescribed.** Morning medications must be taken between 7am-9am. Noon medications must be taken between 12pm-2pm. Dinner medications must be taken between 4:30pm-6:30pm, and evening medications are taken between 8pm-10pm. Children's evening/bed time medications need to be taken between 7:30pm-8:30pm. It is also YOUR responsibility that you notify your doctor(s) you are an addict in recovery. **Ongoing and/or intentional medication non-compliance can result in your discharge from the program/home.**

## **Personal Items**

An "approved items" list will be given to you before moving into the home. You are responsible for your personal items in your room (with the exception of medications). We have limited storage space and bedrooms are small, so you need to keep your personal items to a minimum. We ask that you use your own, outside storage units for large household items. **CFCF is NOT responsible for personal belongings and cannot be held liable to replace lost or stolen items,** so you might want to store any valuable items off-site. **Possession of pornography (or accessing porn on computers/phones is not allowed and can result in your discharge from the home/program.**

## **Personal Vehicles/Transportation**

**If you have your own car, you are required to be a legal driver** (you must have a valid driver's license, the car must be registered and you must have insurance). Copies of all of these items must be provided to the house staff if you intend to use your vehicle or to part it on CFCF property. CFCF is not responsible for your vehicle and not liable for any damage, theft or repairs to your personal vehicle. You are not allowed to transport other people's children or other people in your vehicle without prior permission of the Team.

Any person that transports you and/or your children will also need to be a legal driver and will also have to provide copies of their valid driver's license, registration and insurance to the staff **PRIOR** to being approved to transport you or your children. If you do not have a personal vehicle, CFCF will work with you to have access to buses, cabs, and other transportation so you can meet your outside obligations. This is also true for the first 30 days you live in the house when you are not allowed to use your personal car even if you have one.

## **Visitors**

**At the Main House,** only staff will answer the door. If you wish to have visitors, they must be pre-approved by house staff and must visit during scheduled visitation hours (the staff will provide you with these times). If visitors come to the home and appear under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, they will be sent away by staff. If YOU believe a visitor is under the influence, or if a visitor offers you drugs/alcohol, it is YOUR responsibility to tell staff.

**Hiding/harboring or sneaking in unapproved visitors/persons in the home/on the property will result in your discharge from the home/program.**

**Pets**

Pets of any kind are not allowed.

**Smoking**

Smoking is not allowed in any of the homes. You may smoke in designated areas. Smoking breaks will be limited to 15 minutes and you must watch your children the entire time.

**Compliance**

You will be provided a full list of consequences for rule breaking when you enter the home (or if you ask for them ahead of time). You should know we do NOT expect you to be perfect and we expect that it will take you some time to get used to how the house works and what is expected of you. Staff will help you whenever possible and you will need to ask lots of questions, especially in the beginning. **When in doubt...ASK!**

Each week that you are 100% compliant in the house, you will be rewarded with a \$5 “fishbowl” incentive (gift cards from places around town). If you have small non-compliance issues or rule breaking, you will not receive the \$5 card and there may be additional consequences or tasks you will have to do to change that behavior. Most of these are outlined in the list of rules/consequences you will receive.

**Statement and Acknowledgement of Reading Completely  
House Rules & Rules/Consequences for the Center for Children & Families**

I \_\_\_\_\_, have read the House Rules. I have had enough time to talk about the rules and to ask questions with a CFCF team member. I have also been given a copy of the rules/consequences list and I understand and agree to abide by those rules/consequences. Specifically, I understand what rule breaking/violations will result in my IMMEDIATE discharge from the home/program. I have also received a copy of the Participant handbook and know I will have time to discuss this with house staff and to ask questions about this document as well.

I agree that I am not currently high, drunk, or under the influence of drugs/alcohol as I sign this statement.

DATED this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness/Staff Member Signature